



ROYALTY DIGEST

Quarterly

③ 2022

Started in 2006, Royalty Digest Quarterly is a journal devoted to the history, genealogy and images of the Royal Families of Europe.

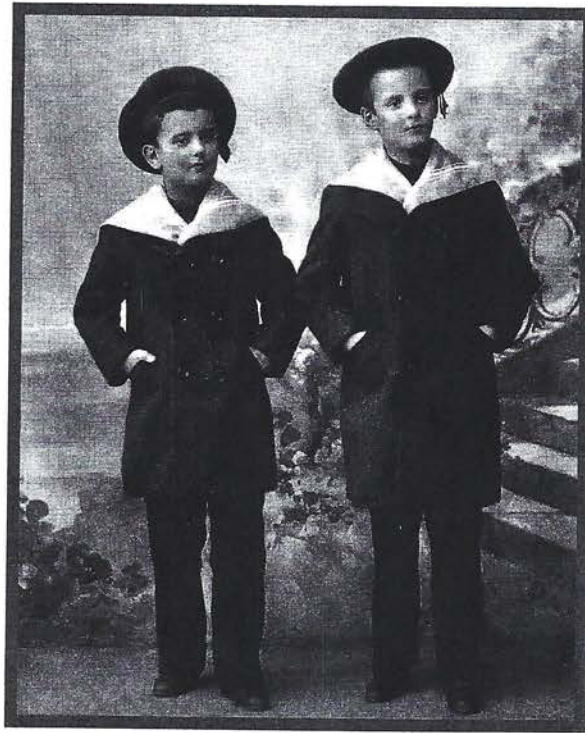


ALLIANCE
In the Balkans

REUSS zu KÖSTRITZ
A Family Album

HABSBURG
Wedding in Ischl

The Karageorgevitch twins, Nicholas on the left and Sergei, were born on March 7, 1895



The Karageorgevitch Twins

Princes or not ...

by Alexandre Tissot Demidoff & Richard Jay Hutto

By 1927 the novelty of hearing about another American heiress marrying a titled husband had begun to lose its luster when news reports from Paris announced that Dorothy Cruikshank Snyder Cochran (1898-1970) had married a Karageorgevitch prince whom some suspected of being a fraud. Dorothy was an amateur actress and aspiring poet. Her grandfather, E. A. Cruikshank, was a Brooklyn real estate developer who left his estate (estimated at almost two million dollars) to Dorothy. Her mother announced in Paris on 10 November 1927, that Dorothy would marry Prince Nicholas Karageorgevitch, "a Russian exile of Serbian ancestry." At the time, Dorothy, her mother, and the prospective groom were, "sharing a large apartment at one of the most pretentious of the hotels here [Paris]." Dorothy, a finishing school graduate, had first married in 1920 Dr. George G. Cochran, Jr. She obtained a divorce in Reno then relocated to Capri where she was writing a novel when she met Prince Nicholas.

The couple married on 15 November 1927, at the city hall in Paris' sixth arrondissement, followed by a religious ceremony at the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral on rue Daru (often called "the Russian church"). The marriage certificate listed Nicholas' mother as Princess Aurora Demidoff and his father as Prince Arsene Karageorgevitch. In reporting the marriage, the *New York Times* was specific as to the groom's heritage, writing not only that Prince Nicholas was a cousin of King Alexander of Yugoslavia but that he was born in Leningrad/St. Peters-

burg, served in the Russian Hussars, then spent two years in prison awaiting his death by firing squad when his Bolshevik friends helped him escape to Paris. Even though the newspaper reported that, prior to the Russian revolution he, "was a multi-millionaire," there was no truth to that assertion.

This was not the groom's first time to the altar. His first wife, Carmen López, born Maria de la Concepción López Esterellas (1890-1990), was a Catalan variety show performer. When she was five and her sister six, they moved with their mother from Barcelona to Paris where they worked as circus performers known as the "Trío Estrellas". In 1908, when Maria was 18, she moved with friends to Rostov-on-Don, the largest city on Ukraine's eastern border.

In 1913 in Rostov Maria said that she married Prince Alexis Makaeff, son of a general, whom she had first met in Paris in 1912 during the time that she was performing as a member of the "Trío Estrellas". They were both 22. From here her story becomes murky as she claimed that they stayed together until the time of Makaeff's passing in 1919. This means that the couple may have earlier divorced in order for Maria to marry Nicholas Karageorgevitch around 1916.

According to Maria, in her somewhat fanciful memoirs, she claimed that Prince Alexis Makaeff and Nicholas were friends since they both served as officers in the Russian Imperial Army. Following separation from Alexis, but for reasons not explained, Maria was in prison in



Left: The beautiful and wealthy Princess Aurora Pavlovna Demidoff gave birth to twin sons but they weren't fathered by her husband, Prince Arsene Karageorgevitch (Right). He was the brother of King Peter I of Serbia. Aurora and Arsene had one child together, Prince Paul, who would later serve as Prince Regent of Yugoslavia

Tbilisi and, according to Maria, Nicholas was instrumental in getting her released that led to their eventual marriage. Sometime in 1916 or 1917, Maria married Nicholas Karageorgevitch in Tbilisi. A record of the marriage contract has yet to surface.

Maria explained that they spent five wonderful years of married life together in Tbilisi from 1916 to 1921. It was from this marriage that she became known as “the lady of the brilliants” because of the purported royal jewels given to her at her wedding by her Demidoff relations. If they existed, they would have been gifts from his grandmother, Princess Elena Petrovna Demidoff (1853-1917), who was living in Odessa at the time.

In February, 1921, Georgia was occupied by the Red Army and Maria wrote that she and Nicholas were captured and transported to a concentration camp in Tobolsk in Siberia where they were separated for four years. Although Nicholas stated in the forward to his art exhibition in New York City that he was released by his captors in recognition of portraits painted of various prison chiefs, it is far more likely that their release more closely followed Maria's version of events.

Maria recounts that it was her father who helped secure their release through a prisoner-of-war exchange. The initiative involved the International Red Cross who transported the couple, together with other prisoners-of-war, the long and arduous journey from Tobolsk to Constantinople and then to Trieste in Italy. The couple then

boarded an Italian steamer that brought them to Marseille in November, 1924. Eventually the couple made their way to Paris. Both were impoverished since their possessions, according to Maria, all were confiscated by the Bolsheviks including Maria's jewelry that she claimed she received from Demidoff family members.

In Paris, the couple became a ‘dance act’ and performed regularly in the cabarets in order simply to survive. They were welcomed by the community of White Russians and supported by Nieves Alonso, a Catalan artist, who helped them settle in Paris and who performed in the Paris cabarets with a group of “trained puppy dogs.” Unfortunately, around this time Nicholas became addicted to alcohol and drugs. In 1925, the couple left Paris for Monaco where they continued to work as performers. Nicholas' work permit from the Monaco authorities was dated 26 December 1925 and showed his profession as a ‘dancer’.

Nicholas' kind and generous aunt, Princess Maria Pavlovna Demidoff (Princess Abamelek-Lazarev), became aware of his plight and commenced sending monthly payments of between 5,000 to 6,000 French francs. It was at this point that Dorothy entered his life. Nicholas and Maria divorced on 12 November 1927. Three days after the divorce Nicholas married Dorothy. Fifteen days after the divorce Maria purchased a home at Torregrossa in her native Catalonia. One can only speculate about the sequence of financial transactions.

Nicholas Karageorgevitch quickly moved on from his marriage to Maria (as did she, marrying Jean Léon Barès then Louis Cazaux as her next husband). His marriage to his American bride, Dorothy Cochran, was witnessed by the bride's mother and by Baron Nikolai A. Tiepolt. The wedding party that evening enjoyed a lavish dinner at Ciro's when they were joined by Grand Duke Boris Vladimirovich and his wife.

In addition to the groom's two wealthy aunts, Princess Maria Abamelek-Lazarev and Countess Elena Demidoff, other guests at the wedding included Prince and Princess Vladimir d'Arbeloff, Christian D. Hemmick (future husband of the very wealthy Alice Pike Barney who was more than twice his age), Prince Sergei Putiatin (formerly a son-in-law of Grand Duke Paul Alexandrovitch), and diplomat Charles Campbell, Jr., who had served as Secretary of the U.S. legation and Consul General in Romania, Serbia, and Bulgaria.

Dr. George Todorovitch, the Serbian Consul General in New York, asserted a week after the wedding that there was no Serbian Prince Nicholas and that the groom was an imposter. The indignant bride insisted that her husband was a son of Prince Arsene Karageorgevitch and of "a Russian princess and that he had been born and raised in Russia and never had been in Serbia, although he bears a Serbian title." The bride announced that her detractors were, "trying to find something wrong with the Prince's connections," and that the pair would soon sail for New York. A report from Belgrade confirmed that, "Prince Nicholas Karageorgevitch, who married Miss [sic] Dorothy Cochran [sic] in Paris last week, is not regarded here as entitled to the degree of cousinship with King Alexander, which he is said to have claimed." The report confirmed that he was a son of Princess Aurora Demidoff, formerly the wife of Prince Arsene, although he had "never been formally admitted even by his elder brother, Prince Paul, who remained with his father and became a Serbian subject." *The New York Daily News* entitled its coverage of the marriage, "Bride Hears Her Prince is Only a Fake." Even at his death one official at the Yugoslavian legation in Paris still said of Nicholas, "He usurped the name of Karageorgevitch and used it, together with his good looks, to impose on women."

Prince Arsene, youngest brother of King Peter I, was indeed married from 1892 to 1897 to the beautiful and wealthy Princess Aurora Pavlovna Demidoff (1873-1904), daughter of Paul Pavlovitch Demidoff, 2nd Prince de San Donato. The Demidoff family manufactured weapons and established an iron foundry for the Russian government, eventually amassing a fortune said to be second only to the Romanoffs.

From around the age of nine, Aurora and her younger siblings were reared without much supervision at the palatial Villa Demidoff in the Tuscan countryside. Family archives make clear that she was a "free spirit" who encouraged the village youths to visit the villa even if they had to climb the fence. As her mother said of Aurora, "She is very independent and does not care if people see

her in this way." At her marriage to Prince Arsene the groom was 33 and his beautiful and wealthy bride only 18. As an officer in the Russian Army he would spend much of his time away from home not only on military manoeuvres but also at the gaming tables of Paris. In 1893 they had a son, Paul, who would become Prince Regent of Yugoslavia from 1936 to 1941.

Aurora wrote on 24 August 1894, to her elder half-brother, Elim Pavlovich Demidoff (1868-1943), that she had made a "terrible mistake" that spring while Arsene was out of the country. She had an affair with Count Ernst Andreas von Manteuffel (born at Dorpat/Tarttu, Estonia, on 27 November 1873, whose family owned thousands of acres in Estonia and produced several Tsarist army officers^{22a}). The affair was over within a few short months but she was shocked to find that she was two months pregnant, and when this became evident divorce proceedings between Arsene and Aurora began. Arsene gallantly agreed to be the "guilty" party in the divorce, admitting to "abandonment," so she could marry the father. His stipulation was that their young son, Prince Paul, must be sent away and not reared with any of her ensuing children. Thus when he was barely a toddler Prince Paul was sent to Geneva to live with Arsene's widowed brother, Prince Peter Karageorgevitch, who would become King of Serbia. Aurora's mother, hearing of the divorce, first recommended counseling for the couple to save their marriage but, once she was fully informed of the circumstances, she was grateful for Arsene's public stance.

Aurora wrote to her brother, Elim, that she had lost, "Arsene, the little one, everything, everything, everything...my life is broken and all hope is lost." She admitted that signing the divorce papers "felt like signing my death certificate." Even if Manteuffel wanted to marry Aurora (and there is no indication that he did), it would not have been possible before the birth. In Russia divorce was still administered by the church with a rigidity unknown in other parts of Europe. The basis for almost all divorces, and they were rare, was permanent abandonment with adultery accounting for very few.

To escape gossip as her pregnancy became more evident, Aurora went to her grandmother in Finland but returned after only a short stay. On 5 October 1894, she wrote to a friend, Elena Vsevolozhskaya, that she had met with Countess Marie Dorothea von Manteuffel whose son, Count Ernst, was the biological father. The prospective grandmother urged the two to marry and then immediately divorce after the birth. Aurora wrote to her friend that she was humiliated but agreed. Elena, Aurora's mother, wrote to Pyotr Durnovo in St. Petersburg, who, in addition to Elena, was Aurora's principal guardian, to ask, "Please let me know if it is true that Countess Manteuffel wrote...that her son would divorce very soon after the marriage. Aurora has told me that." Only a few days later she wrote again, "Has Aurora taken a decision? I told her definitely that marriage in these conditions is senseless and unfair and denies the Christian moral..."

She replied that she has to agree. So, she ignores my advice, as well as yours."

Given the constraints of time, no divorce or remarriage could possibly take place before the twins' birth on 7 March 1895. Within months, Aurora went to stay at the Villa d'Este on the shores of Lake Como. She did not bring her infant sons with her. Their biological father, Count Ernst Manteuffel, evidently never acknowledged them nor played any part in their lives. He married in Tbilisi on 18 August 1917, Irina Smirnova (born 1884 at Nizhny Novgorod, Russia) and they had no children. In his later years he became a miniature painter and lived out his last days at The Haven, a European home for refugees (many of whom were Jewish) on Clonliffe Road in Dublin, Ireland, founded by a Quaker solicitor, Stella M. B. Webb. After the revolution and war, Ernst and Irina traveled on Nansen passports issued for stateless persons by the League of Nations which were also used by, among many others, Princess Vera Constantinovna and Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna (the younger). In 1954 Ernst Manteuffel died in Ireland and his remains were later removed from the Mount Jerome Cemetery in Dublin and sent to Germany for cremation.

The divorce of Aurora and Arsene took two years to complete. It was not presented before the Holy Synod until 15 January 1897, and was finally granted on 20 September 1897. As Arsene had agreed to be the "guilty" party, he was forbidden to re-marry although Aurora, as the "abandoned" party, was free to do so. Therefore at the time of the twins' birth, Arsene was their legal father. Although he allowed them to use his last name, he never officially recognized them within the Serbian royal family. Russia, however, recognized their princely Karageorgevitch title when they were accepted and enrolled as members of the nobility at military school in Kiev. So Nicholas was technically correct when he claimed to have a title recognized in Russia but not in Serbia.

The biological father's younger brother, Count Arvid Manteuffel (1879-1930), had been part of a major scandal not only within the Horse Guards, of which he was a member and his father Commander, but in Russian society. He fell in love with a woman of whom Prince Serge Obolensky formerly married to amorganatic daughter of Tsar Alexander II) wrote, "At that time in St. Petersburg there were three sisters who were successful in society; one of them, Countess Marina Heyden...stood out more for her beauty. She was seductive, very popular, and a big coquette." His opinion was shared by Prince Gabriel Konstantinovich who wrote of one glittering ball, "That evening I really liked the young Countess Marina Heyden, blonde, in a blue dress, very cheerful."

Her grandfather, Count Fyodor Heyden, had been Governor-General of Finland for almost 18 years and her father was posted to St. Petersburg as Chief of the Imperial Chancellery. Because of the demands upon her family's time, the Heydens' beautiful daughter, Marina, was reared chiefly by her grandmother's philanthropist sister, Aurora, wife of Paul Nikolaievitch Demidoff and,

after his death, by Aurora second husband, Andrey N. Karamzin. The families were thus closely affiliated by birth, marriage, and social position for several generations.

When the beautiful young Countess Marina Heyden met Count Arvid Manteuffel, he was "Sure of himself, severely handsome and urbane, scion of a great Baltic family, and a Regimental Officer with a known taste for pretty women and cards. Manteuffel showered Marina with compliments..." Before too long they were engaged which required that the bride be presented to the Empress Alexandra. The Tsarina, who had recently appointed the young woman a maid-of-honor, suggested that the wedding be postponed for one year but the eager bride demurred.

Amidst wedding plans Marina met the elder son of Russia's richest woman, Princess Zenaide Yusupov. Nicholas was slated to inherit his mother's riches as well as her princely title (her husband, Nicholas' father, was Count Felix Sumarokov-Elsten, a lieutenant in the Horse Guards). Marina, although already engaged, immediately fell in love with Nicholas who encouraged her to cancel her impending wedding. His younger brother, Felix Yusupov, who would become infamous as the assassin of Rasputin, deviously tricked Marina into secretly leaving her mother's house and meeting Nicholas publicly on the night before her marriage. She would later write of Felix, "The perverse curve of his lips gave to his angelic features a peculiar hardness. I cannot recall, in all my life, a creature so superbly and perfectly insolent."

Arriving home only hours before her scheduled wedding, Marina's mother forced her to go ahead with the marriage. As 300 guests looked on and 24 attendants stood by, the wedding went forward and the young couple departed for their honeymoon in Paris. The groom was exceedingly surprised to find that Nicholas Yusupov followed them there. According to an attendee at the wedding, "Maria Manteuffel had walked straight out of the hotel in Paris, leaving her bridegroom without a word of farewell, and gone to spend her wedding night elsewhere."

By the time they returned to St. Petersburg everyone knew about the scandal. Because the honour of the Horse Guards had been assaulted, official challenges to a duel were exchanged. The Tsar, when asked his opinion (dueling was officially against the law), "did not oppose it." In the second discharge of the duel, which took place on Krestovsky Island on 5 July 1908, Arvid Manteuffel shot Nicholas Yusupov through the heart. "In its time that sad incident created quite a scandal in St. Petersburg. Their marriage fell to pieces. Marina had to leave for abroad and Manteuffel soon left the regiment." Thus was the charming and wealthy Yusupovs' elder son killed by the brother of the Karageorgevitch twins' biological father. His younger brother, Felix, who later would incur the wrath of the Tsar and Tsarina for killing their friend, Rasputin, was left as the only heir to his mother's riches and title.



*Carmen Lopez, a talented Catalan variety show performer, was Nicholas' first wife.
Right: Carmen wearing jewels she insisted were given to her as a wedding present from Nicholas' family.*

Aurora Demidoff Karamzin, the great-aunt who mentored young Marina, the object of the duel, was already appointed lady-in-waiting to the Empress Alexandra Feodorovna the elder (consort of Tsar Nicholas I), lady-of-the-bedchamber to Empress Alexandra Feodorovna the younger (consort of Tsar Nicholas II), and to her mother-in-law, Empress Maria Feodorovna, consort of Tsar Alexander III). After she was widowed a second time, she used her first husband's fortune to endow schools, kitchens, and other benevolent institutions in Helsinki as well as in St. Petersburg and Florence. Her only child was Paul Demidoff who succeeded his childless uncle, Anatole Demidoff, as the 2nd Prince of San Donato.

Her granddaughter and namesake, Princess Aurora Demidoff, and her first husband, Prince Arsene, had only one child, Prince Paul, in 1893, and remained married until the long-sought divorce was completed in 1897. That son would eventually marry Olga, Princess of Greece and Denmark, and serve as Prince Regent during the minority of King Peter II. Princess Aurora married in 1897, after her divorce from Prince Arsene, Count Palatine Nicholas di Noghera, by whom she already had one son. They would have three more children before her untimely death at 31 in 1904, possibly caused by blood poisoning contracted by a puncture wound from a rose bush. She had long suffered from the leg wound which only grew worse. Sergei, the other twin born to Aurora and fathered by Ernst Mantuffel, died in 1912 and little is known of his life.

There are several clues about what happened to the twin boys as children. Their mother's mother, Princess Elena, took an important interest in the welfare of the twins while they were in Italy. She wrote to her attorney that, given Aurora's approval, she would provide the financial support necessary for "leaving them at Naval College in Livorno and with the nearby Greek Russian Orthodox Church." After their mother's death, Elena assumed responsibility to have the boys moved to Kiev where their grandmother continued to look after them. At her death in 1917, the responsibility passed to her daughter, Maria, affectionally known to the family as 'Moina', who would become the sustaining emotional and financial support of her extended family. She would become the last Demidoff princess to reside at Villa Demidoff until her death in 1955.

The memoirs of Nicholas' first wife, Maria, contend that he was in Russia during World War I, the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, and the Russian Civil War that was still raging in 1921. An article published at his death stated that he attended Military Cadet School in Kiev, probably with his twin brother, then was enrolled in the Nikolaiev School for cavalry officers in St. Petersburg. Achieving officer's rank, he then served as a commander of an army brigade and also secured his airplane pilot's license. So, while he carried a Serbian name, all his life before his marriage to Dorothy was spent in Italy, Russia, and France.



Nicholas (left) in Paris in 1926 around the time he first met Dorothy.

The local newspaper in Brooklyn noted proudly of Dorothy's marriage to Nicholas, "Princess Karageorgevitch is the first Brooklyn girl to marry royalty. Two others, Mae Knowlton, who married the Count von Sierstorpf, a German nobleman of considerable prominence and influence at the court of the former Emperor, and Elsie Moore, who is now the Duchess Marino Torlonia, have married into the ranks of the European nobility."

If Dorothy had doubts about the legitimacy of her husband's title she must have overcome them. A year after their marriage, on 10 November 1928, New York City's Ralston Galleries at 730 Fifth Avenue opened an exhibition of oil paintings by Prince Nicholas Karageorgevitch. A Brooklyn newspaper reported that, "A full length portrait of the artist's wife, the only portrait shown, attracted much attention...It was interesting to note that it was the more intimate friends of the Princess who commented most favorably on the likeness."

The review of the opening reported not only the attendees, including Dorothy's mother, but a stated the artist's lineage:

Prince Karageorgevitch was born in St. Petersburg, Russia, March 7th, 1895. His father was Prince Arsene Karageorgevitch, and his mother before her marriage was the Princess Aurora Demidoff de San Donato. Prince Karageorgevitch studied painting in Kiev. His interest for Brooklyn lies in the fact that about a year ago he married the former Dorothy Snyder, daughter of Mrs. S. C. Snyder of 438 Washington Avenue.

Immediately after the Brooklyn opening there was a successful exhibition of Prince Nicholas' oil paintings and aquarelles at the Ralston Galleries' Fifth Avenue location in Manhattan's Heckscher Building held from 12 to 24 November 1928. A year after that success an additional exhibition of his paintings and watercolors was mounted by the American Art Association at the Anderson Galleries on 57th Street from 25 November to 7 December 1929. The program noted that he had studied art at the Academy in Kiev and, after the Revolution, "he was kept prisoner by the Soviet government for several years...He continued his art in Paris, where he has a studio." While the earlier catalogue states definitively that, "His father was Prince Arsene Karageorgevitch, and his mother before her marriage was the Princess Aurora Demidoff de San Donato," the later one makes no mention of his family. During the intervening year, perhaps he was persuaded to refrain from claiming Prince Arsene as his father. He did tell a reporter, "I have been estranged from my father who divorced my mother a year after I was born."

The catalogues as well as photos of several of the paintings make clear that the prince was no amateur. One reviewer wrote, "In the landscapes the atmospheric effects are very fine, especially in the paintings of Chartres, Pont St. Michel, and one of Antibes where the sunlight falls on old stucco walls and red roofs. The artist testifies to his interest in horses in the paintings...and also in the pencil sketches and several of the aquarelles."

Nicholas' paintings now belong to Dorothy's grandson, John Schouweiler, and his wife, Ann Hamilton. Two of his portraits of Dorothy attempt very different techniques. In the first, a pensive and seated Dorothy, caught in a private moment, reads a book or magazine on her lap in a semi-abstract composition. The other is more figurative in style as a standing full-length portrait holding flowers with a more clearly-delineated sense of space. It portrays a more accurate transcription seeming to engage us as viewers in this moment in her life. It is probably the full-length portrait of Dorothy admired at the 1928 exhibition.

By 1930, Dorothy had grown disillusioned by her husband's addiction to drugs and alcohol and was on the train to Reno where she had obtained her divorce from her first husband. On 20 June 1930, Dorothy also secured a divorce from her prince in Paris, where they had wed. In an interview years later, she told a friend that the Prince had been, "a drug addict." In fact, he died on 2 June 1933, of a morphine overdose in a hotel in Nice where he had been living. "The police held the prince had committed suicide."

At the time of his death he was still in contact with members of his extended family. The newspaper report in Nice quoted his cousin, Count Paul Shouvaloff, whose mother, Countess Elena Demidoff, was Aurora's sister. As mentioned earlier, Paul had attended Nicholas' wedding to Dorothy in Paris, and said of his cousin: "He was a weak man whose conduct was not without reproach, but he devoted himself to friends, and the slightest excess



Dorothy and Nicholas on the steps of the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Paris where they were married. After their wedding in Paris, Dorothy and Nicholas sailed on a honeymoon trip to New York City.

of alcohol intoxicated him... The prince was very simple and liked to talk. He came to France as a political emigrant, but did not stay long, leaving for America where he married." The two cousins were both interested in the movie business although Shouvaloff admitted it might have been, "just a plan for him [Nicholas] to get closer to a Russian film star who he posed as his wife." The aspiring actress was Laura Savitch who had a small role in Alexandre Volkoff's lavish 1927 production of *Casanova* with Ivan Mosjoukine who was then at the height of his film career.

According to Nicholas' cousin, he received, "Five thousand to six thousand francs a month by mail or through a bank. They say that these amounts come to him from America, and as soon as he had the money he devoted himself to paying off debts to the last penny." There is no intimation whether those funds might have come from his former wife, Dorothy, but it seems likely if they were from the United States. They would have been augmented by the monthly amount still sent by his aunt. This would then explain Nicholas' complaint to his cousin that in the past "he used to receive 15,000 francs a month that now was cut to 5000-6,000 francs months".

There was also an unusual report headlined, "Mysterious Prince: Death Prophecy to Beauty Queen." The story alleged that Nicholas had too much to drink while in Paris in 1929 and was picked up, certified as dead, and taken to a morgue where he woke up the next morning

in a shroud. He reportedly jumped up and ran out when, "two women, seeing the apparition, fainted on the spot." That unlikely story was confirmed by Paris' Spanish-language newspaper, *La Nación*, which reported that a taxi driver found his occupant unresponsive and took him to Beaujon hospital where, "The papers and documents that were found in the pockets of the passenger's coat verified that he was Prince Nicholas Karageorgevitch, born in 1895 in Petrograd, belonging to a branch of the Serbian royal family with which he had no dealings."

The first article also reported that Nicholas had, in the days before his actual death, befriended an attractive young British woman who recently won a beauty contest. She dined with him once but "did not enjoy the food." When he asked her again on the night before he died she answered that they could dine together "tomorrow." Nicholas replied, "Tomorrow I shall be dead." Even at his death, the *New York Times* proclaimed him, "the son of Prince Arsene Karageorgevitch and Princess Aurore Demidoff," while the *Washington Star* called him, "a cousin of King Alexander of Yugoslavia and a former officer in the Russian Imperial Army."

Nicholas had a legal prescription for morphine. On the night he died, he had dinner with friends at a Russian restaurant. He drank two vodkas and a half-bottle of St. Emillion and left at 11:00 p.m. He asked his taxi driver to take him to the police station so he could learn which doctor was on duty to fill his prescription. At the local pharmacy he secured 12 bottles of morphine



*Dorothy, seated in a contemplative pose,
painted by her husband, Nicholas.*

hydrochloride 2% solution. He asked the taxi driver to pay 28 francs for the prescription. Neither did Nicholas have the additional 85 francs for taxi fare so he left his official identification papers with the driver as security. Arriving at his hotel room at 2:30 a.m. he injected eight of the 12 bottles of morphine. He was found the next evening by the hotel's cleaning crew. His death certificate listed Arsene as his father and Aurora as his mother. Within days his generous aunt Maria at Villa Demidoff received a letter from the owner of the building in Paris where Nicholas lived asking where his personal possessions should be sent. He also informed her that Nicholas was two months behind in his rent plus there were outstanding debts to a Paris store for refurbishing his rooms. The debt was approximately 20,000 French francs.

His former wife, Dorothy, while in Reno met the man who would become her new husband, Willis J. "Bill" Caffrey (1893-1952), a rancher and a garage proprietor. One newspaper published a photo of the couple with the headline, "Gives Up Title, Weds Mechanic." Others ran the same photo with the explanation, "A title of nobility doesn't mean nearly as much as real love, according to the happy newlyweds pictured here. The bride is Mrs. Dorothy Cruickshank Snyder Cochrane Karageorgevitch Caffrey and the groom is Bill Caffrey, garage proprietor of Reno, Nev. Mrs. Caffrey, wealthy in her own right, went to Reno to divorce Prince Nicholas Karageorgevitch of Serbia, and married Caffrey immediately after getting the decree."

Dorothy enjoyed a happy marriage with her last husband and she is still remembered as kind and generous. She was active in local organizations and published several volumes of poetry as well as one novel. Her mother came to live with her and died in Reno in 1938. As one friend recalled of Dorothy,

She met a fellow who ran a dairy ranch up there on Holcomb Lane. He was rustic. They fell in love and had a very good marriage and a daughter until he died...Dorothy was still vibrant and active. She came to Reno Little Theater because she had tried her talent in New York; it had fizzled. It's very complicated, but she gathered in many young people for her swimming pool. She had a tennis court and theater. So she became the grand aunt to maybe a dozen of us who were in college and I happened to be one of the lucky ones. She was very generous and would throw evening parties and so on... She was a real character... She was so nice. When she died it was like losing one of the family.

Willis W. Caffrey died on 10 March 1953, and Dorothy lived until 7 March 1970. They are buried together at Masonic Memorial Gardens in Reno, Nevada. Although her obituary proudly included the fact that she drove an ambulance in New York City during World War I and had successfully operated their purebred Jersey cattle ranch after her last husband's death, there is no mention of her marriage to a disputed prince. The only name on her gravestone, other than Caffrey, is not her maiden name of Snyder, but the name of her wealthy and generous grandfather, Cruickshank.

Nicholas Karageorgevitch was never recognized by his biological father or by Arsene Karageorgivitch, his mother's husband at the time of the birth of the twins. He could take scarce comfort in the fact that his half-brother, Prince Paul, also had virtually no contact with his father, Prince Arsene. His mother, Aurora, "played no further part in her son's upbringing...Prince Arsene remained an equally remote presence and showed little interest in his shy son...Paul was sent to a boarding school in Lausanne, aged seven, where he led a somewhat solitary existence in a room infested with rats and mice."

An important difference between Paul and his half-brother, Nicholas, was that Paul inherited a 'small fortune' at age eighteen. He often went to visit his Aunt 'Moina' and her very wealthy Armenian husband, Semyon, and became heir to the large Abamelek-Lazarev estate. On their mother's return to Italy, the twins were shuttled off to naval military school in Livorno and had almost no contact with their mother, who died when they were nine, and none with their father.

Prince Paul remembered seeing his mother only twice during his childhood. Both times he was brought to the train station where a woman descended the steps from her railroad car, hugged him tightly, then departed quickly. The last time he was only six years old. If Aurora tried to visit her twins even long enough to steal one embrace, as she did with Paul, there is no record of it.

Notes



A standing portrait of Dorothy painted by Nicholas. It was greatly admired at a 1928 exhibition in New York City. Her descendants still display both portraits.

Their mother, Princess Aurora, died at only 30 in Turin and was buried at the Cemetery Monumentale in Milano in a mausoleum purchased by her mother. It eventually became so decayed that it was destroyed and her remains were moved to a large funereal wall at the cemetery.

The remains of her son, Nicholas, rest in the Russian Orthodox section of Caucade Cemetery at Nice. He shares that ground with hundreds of distinguished Russian families including Galitzine, Obolensky, and Gagarin, as well as Princess Catherine Dolgorukova (the morganatic wife of Tsar Alexander II and mother of his four youngest children), Princess Helen of Serbia (the twice-imprisoned daughter of King Peter I and wife of a Romanoff prince), and Prince Rostislav Alexandrovitch (a nephew of Russia's last tsar). Nicholas and his twin brother, who died 21 years before him, have no descendants to grieve for them but at least he rests among Russians as he would wish.

The authors would like to thank Dorothy's grandson, John Schouweiler, and his wife, Ann Hamilton, for their permission to reproduce several of Nicholas' paintings.

- 1 New York Times, 11 Nov 1927; p 23; approximately \$20 million in today's currency; she received \$669,000 outright at his death and additional funds in the future, New York Times, 8 Oct 1921.
- 2 *ibid*
- 3 The Brooklyn Daily Eagle, 19 Nov 19, p 7.
- 4 New York Times, 16 Nov 1927, p 1.
- 5 *ibid*. It is true that his mother's family was very wealthy.
- 6 Vicent Lladonosa Giró, "La 'Princesa'... de Torregrossa: Maria de la Concepció Lòpez Esterellas," *Petites Històries de Torregrossa* (Número 14), Torregrossa, Sep 2009. This important research paper also presents the various associated issues from Le petit Niçois newspaper. The authors are indebted to the generous and kind support extended towards this article by Vicent Lladonosa Giró, Antònia Castelló Oliveres, Jordi Bails Castelló, and Josep Lladonosa. Cited after as 'La Princesa de Torregrossa'.
- 7 Gallart, Felip, Lladonosa Vicent. «Maria López Esterellas (1890-1990). La Princesa Que Va Venir Del Fred». *Mascaña: Revista d'estudis Del Pla d'Urgell*, [en línia], 1, Núm. 10, p 93, <https://raco.cat/index.php/Mascaña/article/view/360692> [Consulta: 15-05-2022]. After as 'La Princess Que Va Venir Del Fred'.
- 8 La Princess Que Va Venir Del Fred p 93.
- 9 Poletti, Ugo. Princess San Donato, honorary citizen of Florence and an outstanding woman from Odessa, The Odessa Journal, 7 Nov. 2021. <https://odessa-journal.com/princess-san-donato-honorary-citizen-of-florence-and-an-outstanding-woman-from-odessa/>
- 10 Renée-Marguerite Frick-Cramer. *Rapatriement des prisonniers de guerre centraux en Russie et en Sibérie et des prisonniers de guerre russes en Allemagne*, dans *Revue internationale de la Croix-Rouge*, Vol 2, no 17, may 1920, p 526-556
- 11 La Princess Que Va Venir Del Fred p 94
- 12 <https://raco.cat/index.php/Mascaña/article/view/360692>
- 13 Baron Nikolai Tiepolt (1864-1948) and his wife, Elizabeth, emigrated onboard the Southern Cross, arriving in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on 14 Apr 1937. He was then 72 and she was 69. One of the other passengers, seven year-old Alexander Vladimir d'Arbeloff, was Tiepolt's grandson. He would become the founder of tech company Teradyne and chairman of M.I.T.
- 14 Brooklyn Daily Eagle, 21 Nov 1927; p 1.
- 15 *ibid*
- 16 "Disclaims Prince Nicholas: Serbian Dynasty Does Not Include Him as a Member," New York Times, 25 Nov 1927, p 6.
- 17 *ibid*
- 18 New York Daily News, 21 Nov 1927.
- 19 Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser, 22 Jun 1933, p 4.
- 20 For more on the Demidoff family, see "The Demidoffs and the Royals," by Datu Salvia Ocaña, in *RDQ* 4/2021 p 1-14.
- 21 Following the passing of their father, Paul Demidoff, 2nd Prince of San Donato, in 1885, his wife, Elena, returned to Kiev and then to Odessa where she died in 1917.

- 22 Archivio Storico della Provincia di Firenze, cited after as A.S.P.F., Fondo Demidov, II, 46. The authors wish to thank Maria Paola Gatti of Florence who kindly visited the Demidov Archives A. Tissot Demidoff in late Oct 2021 and provided translation into English of the many relevant original manuscripts written in Italian.
- 22a Galina Ippolitova, *Aurore Demidova - Countess Noghera* (St. Petersburg, 2009), pp 16-19. *Gothaisches genealogisches Taschenbuch der gräflichen Häuser*, 1873. Son of Ernst Gotthard, Count von Manteuffel (1844-1922) of Pomerania and Countess Marie Dorothea, née von Weiss (1827-1898).
- 23 GARF [State Archive of the Russian Federation], f 2720, op 1267, 15, 21-24. Letter from Aurora Pavlovna to Elim Pavlovitch written from Hungo, Finland, "the evening' of 20 August 1894".
- 24 Freeze, Gregory L., "Bringing Order to the Russian Family: Marriage and Divorce in Imperial Russia, 1760-1860." *Journal of Modern History*, 62 (1990): pp 709-748.
- 25 RSHA [Russian State Historical Archive] op 934, on 2, g 385 Telegrams of Elena P. Demidova to Pyotr Durnovo.
- 26 <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/183429930/ernst-andrej-mannteuffel>
- 27 Serge Obolensky, *One Man in His Time* (New York, 1958). Obolensky later married American heiresses Alice Astor and Marilyn Fraser Wall.
- 28 Marina's grandmother was Emilia Karlovna Shernval. Lermontov devoted a madrigal to her beauty.
- 29 Gretchen Haskins, "His Brother's Keeper", *Atlantis Magazine*, vol 2, #3, 2000.
- 30 Marina de Heyden, *Rubis Portent Malheur* (Monte Carlo, 1967), p 85.
- 31 Countess Nostitz, *The Countess from Iowa* (New York, 1936), p 88. A former actress, born Lilie Bouton, she first married Baron Guido von Nimptsch then Count Gregory von Nostitz, one of the few titled husbands of American wives who was wealthy in his own right. She became a prominent hostess in Paris before all their funds in Germany were sequestered. Lilie supported him in his old age by periodically selling her jewels.
- 32 Jacques Ferrand, *Les Princes Youssouppoff* (Paris, 1991), p 217.
- 33 Gabriel Konstantinovich, *Memories in The Marble Palace*, p 46.
- 34 A.S.P.F., Fondo Demidov, II, 37 Exchange of letters between Demidov family lawyer, Lecchini, and Princess Elena Petrovna's Secretary, Cesare Torrini.
- 35 A.S.P.F., Fondo Demidov, II, 37. Letter dated 23 Apr 1904 from Cesare Torrini to Avv. Liccheni
- 36 The Imperial Russian Army purchased its first planes in 1910 so Nicholas would have been among their first pilots.
- 37 *Brooklyn Life*, 26 Nov 1927, p 10.
- 38 "Society of Brooklyn," *Brooklyn Life and Activities of Long Island Society* from Brooklyn, NY, Nov 17, 1928; p 8.
- 39 *ibid*
- 40 *Manchester (Conn.) Evening Herald*, 21 Nov 1927.
- 41 *Brooklyn Life and Activities of Long Island Society*, Brooklyn, NY; 17 Sep 1928, p 8.
- 42 *The Capital Times* (Madison, Wisc.), 13 Sep 1930, p 7.
- 43 *New York Times*, 3 Jun 1933, p 4.
- 44 Interview with Dr. James Hulse, 26 Feb 2015, Special Collections Department, University of Nevada, Reno Libraries, pp 6-8.
- 45 *New York Times*, Jun 3, 1933; p 4.
- 46 "La Princesa de Torregrossa," p 52.
- 47 *Ibid*. Paul Shouvaloff (1903-1960) would change his name to Paul Sheriff and win an Academy Award for Art Direction for John Huston's *Moulin Rouge* (1952). His son, Alexander Shouvaloff, would become curator of the Theatre Museum in Covent Garden and an expert on the Diaghilev Ballet.
- 48 *Ibid*
- 49 *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 22 Jun 1933, p 4.
- 50 *La Nación*, 11 Nov 1929; "Nikolai calaverada de Paris"
- 51 *Ibid*
- 52 *New York Times*, 3 Jun 1933; "Narcotic Kills Prince."
- 53 *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), 3 Jun 1933; "Prince Nicholas Dies."
- 54 Copy of a one page letter from Demidoff Archives in Florence dated "Paris, 21 Jun 1933" from H. Gilon of Paris 6eme to Madame and noted to be signed by Gilon.
- 55 *The Chillicothe Constitution-Tribune* (Chillicothe, MO.), Sep 13, 1930, p 5.
- 56 *Santa Cruz News* (Santa Cruz, Calif.), 26 Sep 1930, p 8
- 57 *Chambersburg Public Opinion* (Chambersburg, PA), 15 Sep 1930, p 10; *Capital Times* (Madison, Wisc.), 13 Sep 1930, p 7.
- 58 *New York Times*, 15 Feb 1938.
- 59 Dr. James Hulse interview. As a young woman Dorothy starred in several theatre productions and won a silver cup for the best amateur acting offered by producer David Belasco.
- 60 *Reno Gazette-Journal*, 7 Mar 1970, p 2.
- 61 Robert Prentice, *Prince Paul of Yugoslavia* (London, 2021), p 58.
- 62 This article's co-author, Alexandre Tissot Demidoff, attended a religious ceremony marking her reinterment and gave a presentation at the local Russian Orthodox Church. <http://www.hram.it/?p=13218>.
- 63 Also interred at Caucade are artist Romaine Brooks, author and publisher Frank Harris, medical pioneer Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld, poet and critic Brian Howard, film composer Maurice Jaubert, vodka producer Vladimir P. Smirnoff, philanthropist Sergey A. Stroganov, and French "monkey glands" surgeon Dr. Serge Voronoff,



Nicholas could never control his addiction to alcohol and drugs. He was only 38 when he died of a morphine overdose.